



MYIAGRA NITIDA: Gould.

J. Gould and H. C. Richter del et lith.

Hallman del & Walton imp

## MYIAGRA NITIDA, *Gould.*

### Shining Flycatcher.

*Todus Rubecula*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. xxii., female.

*Red-breasted Tody*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 147.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 126.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 92, female.

*Myiagra Rubeculoides*, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 253, female.

——— *nitida*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 142; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part IV, male.

*Satin Sparrow*, of the Colonists of Van Diemen's Land.

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THE *Myiagra nitida* arrives in Van Diemen's Land about the end of September, commences breeding soon after its arrival, rears a somewhat numerous progeny during the months of summer, and departs again in February. In performing these migrations it necessarily passes directly over the colonies of South Australia and New South Wales, yet it seldom occurs in collections from those countries, and I believe is only seen there during the passage. It is a most lively, showy and active bird, darting about from branch to branch and sallying forth in the air in pursuit of its insect prey with a most singular, quick, oscillating or trembling motion of the tail.

I experienced but little difficulty in obtaining several of its nests and eggs among the gullies and forest lands on the north side of Mount Wellington, particularly those immediately in the rear of New Town, near the residence of the Rev. Thomas J. Ewing, who frequently accompanied and aided me in my search. The nest is usually placed at the extreme tip of a dead branch, at a height varying from twenty to forty feet from the ground. Some nests are formed of a minute species of light green moss, others are constructed of fine threads of stringy bark; all are rendered very warm by a dense lining of soft hair, probably that of the opossums or kangaroo rats, and wool, or the soft silk-like threads of the flowering stalks of moss, the down of the tree-fern, and the blossoms of many other kinds of plants; and the outsides of all are very similar, being alike ornamented with small pieces of lichen stuck on without any degree of regularity; these different materials are all felted together with cobwebs, or vegetable fibres. The form of the nest appears to depend upon the nature of the site upon which it is built: if placed on a level part of the branch, the nest is large and high; if in a fork, then it is a more shallow structure; in each case the opening is as perfect a circle as the nature of the materials will admit: the height varies from two inches to three inches and a quarter, the average breadth of the opening is about one inch and three-quarters, and the depth one inch. The eggs are generally three in number, somewhat round in form, and of a greenish white spotted and blotched all over with umber brown, yellowish brown, and obscure markings of purplish grey; their medium length is nine lines and breadth seven lines.

The weight of this bird is nearly three ounces and three-quarters; the stomach is muscular, and those examined contained the remains of dipterous and coleopterous insects.

The note is a loud piping whistle frequently repeated.

The male has the lores deep velvety black; all the upper surface, wings, tail and breast of a rich deep blackish green with a metallic lustre; primaries deep brown; under surface of the shoulder, abdomen and under tail-coverts white; bill lead-colour at the base, passing into black at the tip; irides and feet black.

The female, as will be seen on reference to the accompanying Plate, differs considerably from the male; the upper surface being much less brilliant, and the throat and breast of a rich rusty red, a style of colouring which is also characteristic of the young males during the first autumn of their existence.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.